# HE CORRESPONDENT.

Magna est Veritas et Prevalebit.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY; OR, TRUTH DRAWN FROM FABLES.

CHAP 1.

(Continued from our last.)

As an instance of the facility with which the compilers of those times altered the names of persons, and the dates of events, we shall notice a very remarkable one of this kind, which we find in the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus. It is an evident alteration of the curse, we have above quoted from Matthew, made with the intention of destroying a positive eviderce afforded by the text, or tradition, of the posthumous and late fabrications of the gospels. To effect this, Nicodemus, or whoever wrote the gospel bearing his name, substituted to the name of Zacharias son of Barachias, mentioned in Matthew, that of Zachariah the son of Jehoiada killed by command of king Joash. This substitution was certainly the work of man better acquainted with the recent and ancient history of the Jews, than any of our canonical evangelists seem to have been; and very probably, knowing only the Jewish books in their Greek translation, called the Septuagint. We shall presently shew, that Matthew himself, who wrote in the Syriae language, knew very little of Hebrew. The reading of Nicodemus is, however, inadmissible (and can be of no avail to orthodox christians who re-

was not a crime of the people, but one committed by king Joash alone: and, moreover, this was an event of so ancient a date, and had been followed by somany other atrocities, and there had been so much innocent blood shed by the Jews since that time, to that of Jesus, that it would have been impossible for him to circumscribe the crimes of mankind from Abel till the reign of Joash, so many centuries anterior to our era.

Such anachronisms, proceeding either from design or ignorance, are very frequent in books of ancient, and even of modern history. catholic legends of St. Dionysius or Denis afford a curious and truly ludicrous instance of the ignorance, credulity, and imposture of past ages, and of the impudent forgeries of the clergy in those times. This Dionysius, to whom the introduction of Christianity among the Gauls is attributed, who is the patron of France. and to whom many temples have been erected in that kingdom, and is said to have performed the most wonderful miracles, has been proved to have had no real existence, and to be nothing else but Bacchus, adored under the celebrated name of Dionysius, one of whose two yearly feasts among the gentiles, fell exactly on the same day of their calandar as in the Roman one. According to Gregoire de Tours, St. Denis came to the Gauls in the year 250 under the consulate of Decius and Gratus. Other chronicles place his mission ject that gospel,) because the murder between the years 90 and 100. Some of Zachariah the son of Jehoiada say he suffered martyrdom at Athens;

others at Paris, and others in Germany. Four different churches in different parts of Europe, pretend to be in possession of his bones! The Flor Sanctorum of the catholic church is full of such invented fabulous legends, among which that of the 11,000 virgins stands conspicuous. Even the Roman compliments of the season from which our Happy New Year is taken, was converted into a human being, and two female saints sprung from it under the names of St. Perpetua and St. Felicitas Perpetua felicitas or durable happiness was the Roman formula for wishing a Happy New Year. The calendar is full of such pretended saints, and Bacchus himself has received the honor of being sanctified, his feast coming close to that of his namesakes St. Dionysius, and St. Eleuoherias (another name or epithet of Bacchus in Latin Liber.) Vera Eikon or Iconica, signifying the true image, has become St. Veronica. Two feasts of Bacchus were celebrated among the gentiles, one in spring, the other at the time of the vintage; the former was called urbana, and the latter rustica as devoted to the country, and was designated thus-Festum Dionysii, Eleuoherii, Rustici. In the Roman catholic calendar we find the 7th October, Festum St. Bacchi, and on the 9th Festum Sanctorum Dionysii, Eleuoherii a Rusticii!

When we thus find the deities of paganism transformed into christian saints, and even mere words converted into real inhabitants of para- ning of our era. dise, we should not wonder at the facility with which the most absurd le- mies, a great number of Jews resigends were fabricated and beheved in ding in Alexandria, began to become the first centuries, and in the ages of acquainted with the doctrines of Plathe most profound ignorance, when the to, of Pythogoras, of Hermas and priests alone possessed some very Zoroaster, and attempted to concilisuperficial knowledge of ancient ate them with those contained in the learning and history. In those the pentateuch and other Jewish wristory of Jesus stands on no better tings. Other Jews, who had fled

historical foundation than those of Jason and his Argonauts, of Hercules, of Hermes, of St. Denis, and other such fabulous and allegorical heroes, whose legends have come down to us, and were considered as real history by most nations, on much better grounds than those on which Christian divines have attempted to establish the truth of the legend of Jesus. Posterity will one day learn with astonishment and contempt the stupid credulity of their forefathers for many ages, even after three consecutive centuries of comparative light and diffusion of learning and of science throughout Europe.

### CHAP. II.

Having thus shewn the Gospel story to be inadmissible, and produced evidence drawn from the Evangelists themselves, proving their works to have been written long after the taking of Jerusalem by Titus, and attempted to discover the real individual, who, probably, by his name, character, prophetic enthusiasm and extraordinary death, furnished the ground work for the historical part of the legend of Jesus, we shall now proceed to examine how the essential dogmas of Christian faith were blended with Jewish doctrines, and Jewish epochs, and how they came to form a connected system. But, before we proceed, it is proper to say something of the state of religious opinions among the Jews in the times that preceded the begin-

Under the reign of the first Ptole-

from their country, to avoid being involved in its ruin when they were conquered and led into captivity, had repaired to Egypt, but finding themselves an object of aversion to the inhabitants of the towns, they retired into the interior of the country and went as far as the Desert. There. deprived of books, and remote from their brethren, they contracted the habits of an ascetic life. Some Pythagoreans, alike victims of persecution, sought an asylum in the same solitudes. The conformity between their situation soon produced that of opinion; and it was from such a combination of doctrines and practices that sprung the two sects, called Essenes and Therapeutae.

When Ptolomy Philadelphus, whose tolerant disposition led him to render all men happy, without any distinction of party, sect, or country, allowed the Jews to return to their native land, they caried with them and propogated among their nation the religious and philosophical doctrines which they had learnt in Egypt, just as their forefathers had brought the secret tenets of their religion. from Babylon the opinions and doctrines of the Chaldeans. The Essenes were a sect of Jews given to a retired and contemplative life and practising the purest and most austere morality; they could not therefore endure the corruptions which they found introduced in Jerusalem of Judea. Strictly attached to their union prevailed among them as beand mode of life resembled very ed towards the East; they then be- tuous during the life of the individu-

gan their occupations. On the 5th hour they bathed and then took a frugal meal at a common table, durwhich they kept a profound silence. Their repast was blessed by a priest or elder, and on rising from table they rendered graces to God, and returned to their work. In the evening, they assembled at supper, observing the same silence and other formalities. They never uttered an oath; and their property was common to all. They were constantly According to the a white dress. rule of Pythagoras, no member was admitted to their community without a previous noviciate of three years. during which the discretion, zeal, and character of the candidate were tested. They bound themselves by a rigorous and solemn promise, to do no injury to their fellow creatures, to observe strictly the rules of the community, to shun the wicked, to obey the law of the land, and to be faithful to its government; not to alter the doctrine, and to prefer death to the revealing to the profane any of

This austere sect, enthusiastic, moral, and deeply impressed with the intimate conviction of its own sanctity, displayed the greatest firmness in the adherance to its maxims and tenets, and became, in fact, the parent school and model of the primitive Christians; or, to speak more corand spreading through all the cities rectly, it was this very sect which afterwards assumed the denomination principles and customs, they lived of Nazarenes and Christians. Among secluded in the country in situations their doctrines, was a belief in the remote from the towns: the greatest decrees of destiny or providence, in the immortality of the soul, which tween brothers, and their doctrines they considered as confined in the body as within a prison, whence it closely those of the Pythagoreans escaped on the cessation of life, to and of some sects in India. They receive high blessings and rewards rose before the dawn of day, and in a delicious paradise of everlasting adored God, having their faces turn- spring and bliss, if it had been virded to the impulses of vice.

the same sect, but they were still wholly to contemplation, abandoned command of God. their families, their property, and renounced all worldly concerns. Rising above terrestrial objects, they elevated their mind to the Deity, and Morality of the Stage,-No. I. in their eestatic visions, they thought his perfections. to their intercourse with the Greeks, made no impression on the lower ornation; who, like the Sadducees, slavery and superstition, gained the remained invariably attached to the ascendant. old opinions, and rejected the imthe Jews who, without adopting the is beyond all doubt; but this is no Essenes, admitted the immortaward religious practices. Herod the Great.

nature of the soul, probably, says der the heart tender and susceptible

al; or to be tortured by the most Condillac, because they thought the terrible punishments in dark subterra- spirituality, the immortality and the nean abodes or hell, if it had yiel- liberty of the soul were problematic doctrines, upon the truth of which The Therape utæ were a branch of neither Moses nor any other of the sacred writers had manifested a more enthusiastic and austere in their clear and positive opinion, and much They devoted themselves less, made it matter of faith and a

To be continued.

For the Correspondent.

If we except religion and politics, to approach nearer to God, as they there is no subject, perhaps, that has became detached from material ob- occasioned so much discussion as the jeets; and to acquire a state of pu- drama, or that has been debated with rity fit to contemplate and enjoy all so much virulence and acrimony: These new doc- and these disputes have caused varitrines, unknown to the Jews previous ous vicissitudes to the stage, which seems to have been favored or discouraged, raised or depressed, in proders, or on the great majority of the portion as liberty and good sense, or

That the stage has been often limortality of the soul. Those among centious, and its managers eccentric, Secret dogmas of the Pythagorean argument against its usefulness, or any just cause for its suppression. lity of the soul, and some other The theatre, under due encouragedoctrines of the spiritualists, were ment, and proper management, should called Pharisees. They are said to be regarded a school for morality have generally been superstitious, and virtue. Here we learn, and immoral, and, like most priests in learn in the most lively and affecting our days, they masked under the ap- manner, the tendency and force of pearance of piety, an insatiable thirst our affections and passions, and the for power and wealth. They posses- great use of reason in their conduct sed great authority over the people, and regulation. We see the misand indulgent to vice, they were only chiefs and horrors which result from strict in matters of faith and in out- vice; and the happiness and bles-They sings that crown a regular course of formed the dominating sect, and were virtue. The sight of a hero, bleedin possession of the religious author- ing in the cause of his country, inity in the synagogue in the reign of spires us with courage; and, what is more, the misfortunes of the brave, These sects, and some others of the virtuous, and the innocent, teach less note, lived however in the grea- us to feel and to weep; and to sotest harmony, notwithstanding the ciety it is of no small consequence to difference of opinion concerning the humanize the mind of man, and renof these impressions; since it would correct and conceal them, lest we be a curb to wild ambition and law- should be pointed out as the objects less power, and prevent the effusion of that ridicule. Thus the dramatic of much human blood.

that might result from a well regulated drama; for in the theatre our youth could learn an elegant taste, a just and graceful deportment and behaviour, and a proper and forcible elocution and pronunciation, which are no where so well cultivated as on the stage. To fill youth with the love of virtue, to infuse into them noble sentiments, and lead them on in the road to honor and happiness, proper examples should not only be set before them, but these examples should be enforced by proper persons. A lecture on charity by a miser, on economy from an extravagant, on virtue from a debauchee, or on chastity from a prostitute, however well enforced by elocution and pronunciation, is not sufficiently felt, because we perceive the deception. If an orator would affect his audience, (says Cicero,) he must really be affected himself; a rule which concerns the player as well as the orator, and points out the reason why, in some cases, we are so little moved by the most masterly imitators. Propriety of character is, therefore, of infinite consequence on the stage. He who would teach men to live well, should learn to live well himself; for there is no other way to recommend virtue forcibly and effectually.

ed, and we return instructed.

poet, whether serious or gay, makes Nor are these all the advantages our pleasures conduce to our profit; awakens the heart to a sense of its duty, and gives us lessons that are

permanent and lasting.

That the ancients, especially the Grecians, paid the greatest regard to their theatres, will appear from a review of the history of the rise and progress of their drama; which at first, indeed, was very rude and simple, and, most probably, had its origin in their harvest and vintage-feasts; when, after singing hymns in honor of the gods and heroes, they usually diverted themselves with singing gay and satirical songs, and reciting or acting characters that were either vicious or full of foible, in order to render those whom they suited ridiculous and contemptible. The poets, who were the philosophers and divines of that age, perceiving that this way of punishing a man had more effect on the people than their serious admonitions, soon adopted this method of instruction, not only to ridicule folly and discountenance vice, but to raise in their youth a noble emulation, and inspire them with the love of liberty, honor, and glory. Besides which, they found the people solicitous of instructions delivered in this manner; they saw those crowding to the theatre who but seldom frequented the other schools; and We go to the theatre to be divert- therefore, like prudent physicians, In they gilt their medicines, or converttragedy, we weep at the misfortunes ed them into cordials, when they of others; we perceive by what found their patients were too delicate means those misfortunes arose; and or too obstinate to receive them in by this example are taught to guard any other manner. Thus the preagainst them. In comedy, when we cept, at the same time it was enforcsee our own vices, or foibles ridicul- ed, was also conveyed by the examed in others, though we laugh we are ple; the most useful lessons were stung, and go home and endeavor to learned without the trouble or appear-In water with the gray deather to the within the management of the

pain of reproof. THESPIS.

For the Correspondent.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

state of the press is a fair criterion whereby to judge of the justice or tyranny of its rulers. In countries where the government is absolute, the press is completely fettered; no one dares, but at the risk of his liberty, and, perhaps, his life, to make use of this engine with any degree of freedom. In those nations where there is what is nicknamed a constitution, which, at best, is but another name for tyranny, the press is sometimes resorted to with a degree of boldness which alarms priests and despots; and their pretended love of free governments, ends in the sacrifice of all who have virtue and usurpations.

To those who breathe an atmosphere not contaminated by the follies and vices of monarchy, how discordant must it sound to their ears, to hear of kings very kindly consentnonsense of kings giving to their people such a form of government, is too contemptible even for ridicule. in this happy republic. There truth is a libel if it be told against the interest, folly, or vices of kings, priests,

ance of study, and the minds of men and in exact proportion to the truth humanized and polished without the that has been told. Folly and falsehood flow copiously from the press in England; while reason and truth are not permitted to appear, because truth is always hostile to the privi-Mr. Editor: In every nation the leged classes. If it should be asked, why has the press been always fettered? the answer is plain:-did tyrants but cause it to be free, the artificial noble would be laughed at and despised; while the truly noble by nature would be recognized by reason and by common sense.

A free press is the terror of civil and ecclesiastical tyrants; the guardian of just governments; the best protector of honest and upright magistrates; and the last and best hope of slaves. Its enemies in this country are numerous and powerful. But let me ask, who are they? Those whom Americans have appointed to administer the laws of courage to unmask and expose their their country, and to conduct their national concerns, must be their Their system of governfriends. ment is by no means mysterious; their general constitution requires only to be known, to be generally admired. The laws by which they ing to bestow on their subjects, or are governed emanate from the peorather their slaves, a liberal consti- ple, who know how to appoint their tution! To a true republican, the rulers and to respect them. Who, then, I again ask, can be the enemy of a free press? It must be those who do not understand the princi-It matters not to what country we ples of republicanism, or the bigoted turn our eyes; if the laws of that and persecuting priests, who carry country do not emanate from the on a spiritual traffic, unaccompanied people, the press cannot be free.— with either trouble or expense, and The conductors of the press in Eng- who live in ease and splendor on the land are placed in circumstances labors of the credulous, though widely different from those existing honest and industrious members of society. If priests had not, in every age, been the enemies of free inquiry; if they had not by their conor aristocrats; and the attorney duct demonstrated themselves to be general visits the offence according hirelings, whose whole aim was to to the high station of the personage, fleece the sheep instead of feeding

enemies to the liberty of thought, of had contended that it was permitted, countenances of liberal men.

The press (even fettered as it has martyrdom; and its freedom in this country will forever prevent their smoking embers from being again rekindled. The Christian sects of America ought themselves to rejoice and wish it success; for had the press been unfettered for the last three hundred years, all those cruel wars, tortures and burnings which have disgraced humanity, would have been prevented.

### Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet.

(Continued from our last.)

OF THE POLICY OF JESUS. Could there have been a more subtle answer than that of Jesus. which he made in the case of the adulteress? The Jews asked him if they should stone the woman? Instead of answering positively to the question, which would have led him into the snare that his enemies spread for him, (for the negative would have directly opposed the law, and the affirmative have convicted him of rigor and cruelty, which would have made him unpopular) he said, "He that is without sin among you, cast the first stone at her." A mild answer, and which clearly proved his presence of mind. Being asked another time if it was proper to pay tribute to Cæsar, and then seeing the bust of the destroyer of the ancient law, and prince stamped on the money which father of the modern, which was

the flock, some credit would have they showed him, he evaded the difbeen due to them on the score of ficulty by saying, " Render unto honesty. But the history of eighteen Cæsar that which is Cæsar's." The hundred years proves them to be difficulty consisted in this: if he speech, and of the press. These he would have rendered himself are, and will be, the enemies of man- amenable to the Roman governkind. Their spiritual fulminations, ment; if, on the contrary, he had which they so frequently utter from said that they ought to pay tribute, the pulpit, are only calculated to he would have destroyed the law of create a smile of contempt on the Moses, which he professed he did not wish to do. He did as some princes, who, while they are consolbeen) has extinguished the fires of idating their power, promise to confirm the privileges of their subjects, but when they succeed, forget the accomplishment of such promises. When the Pharisees asked him by what authority he pretended to preach and teach the people, Jesus, penetrating their design, (which was to convict him of imposture, if he had answered by human authority, since he did not belong to the priesthood, which alone were charged with the instruction of the people) if he had boasted of preaching by the express order of God, his doctrine would have thus opposed the law of Moses. But he got himself out of this dilemma by asking them, in whose name John baptized? The Pharisees, who for political reasons were opposed to this baptism, would have condemned themselves by confessing that he baptized in the name of God, and if they had not confessed it, they would have exposed themselves to the fury of the populace, who believed the contrary. To escape, therefore, they answered that they did not know; to which Jesus Christ replied, that in like manner he would not tell them in whose name and by whose authority he preached.

Such were the evasions of this

built on the ruins of the former, and these means, Jesus attempted to in which a disinterested mind can take advantage of the political erdiscover no more characters of the rors of Moses, and to immortalize divinity than in any of the other his new laws; an undertaking whose sects which preceded it. Its founder, who was not altogether ignorant, seeing the extreme corruption of the Jewish republic, judged it near its end, and thought that its ashes would give being to another state. The fear of its being anticipated by others more artful than himself, made him haste to establish himself by means opposed to those of Moses, who studied to make himself formidable and terrible to other nations. Jesus, on the other hand, attracted them to his person by the hope of the advantages which they would enjoy in another life, which he said would be obtained by believing in him. Moses only provided temporal advantages to those who observed his laws. Jesus made them hope that the rewards he promised would never perish. The laws of the one only comprehended the exterior; those of the other penetrated the interior, influenced the Ahoughts, and assumed a character entirely opposed to those of Moses. Hence it is inferred that Jesus believed, as Aristotle, that it happens with religion and states as with all individuals who are begotten and decomposed, and as nothing can be formed without decomposition, no law gives place to another which is not entirely opposed to it. But as the determining to pass from one system of laws to another, costs infinite trouble, and as it is very difficult in general to effect a change of mind in matters of religion, Jesus, in imitation of other innovations, recurred to miracles, the rock on which the ignorant have always split, and the refuge of all the cunning and aspiring.

Christianity being

great success exceeded, perhaps,

his highest expectations.

The Hebrew prophets thinking to honor Moses, predicted a successor who would resemble him; that is, a Messiah, great in virtues, powerful in wealth, and terrible to his enemies. But these prognostics produced directly contrary effects .-An infinity of ambitious persons, taking advantage of them, pretended to be the promised Messiah, which caused all those revolutions that continued until the total destruction of the ancient republic of the Hebrews. Jesus, more artful in this respect than the Mosaic prophets, by denouncing any one who should afterwards raise themselves up against him, (if by chance there should be any) foretold that such a man would be the greatest enemy of God, the associate of demons, the bond of union to all the viscious, and the desolation of the world .-After such a panegyric, it appears that the devil has tempted no one to say that he was antichrist; and I do not believe that a secret more unapropos could be found to perpetuate a law. But nothing can be more fabulous than what has been tattled about this pretended bugbear. St. Paul, in his time, said that Antichrist was already born, and that consequently, it was near the coming of Jesus. Nevertheless, more than 1600 years have passed since the prediction of the birth of this tremendous personage, and nobody has heard of him. It is true, some have applied these words to Ebion and Cerinthus, two inveterate enemies of Jesus, whose pretended divinity they combatted. But there founded by is no doubt that if this interpretation conforms to the sense of the proceeds the conformity which exwords of the apostle, (which can ists between the doctrines of the by no means be believed) such Old and New Testaments, and the would designate an infinity of antichrists in every age, since there has not been a truly wise man, who possessing truth, but would say that the history of this Jesus is a despicable roman e and that his law is nothing more than a tissue of fable, kept in use by ignorance, sustained, by interest and protected by tyranny.

It is surely to be wondered at, that a religion established on such weak foundations, should be thought divine or supernatural. Is it not also an extraordinary fact, that the learned were not among the followers of Jesus. Ah! he knew too well that his law would not reconcile itself with "common sense."-This, without doubt, was the reason why he so frequently declaimed against the learned, whom he excluded from his kingdom, where alone were admitted the poor in spirit, the simple, and the foolish. Without doubt, some of these sensible persons will console themselves for this loss, in exchange for not having the company of such rabble,

### THE MORALS OF JESUS.

With regard to this head, nothing divine can be seen in them that can make them preferable to the writings of the ancients. Or, as might better be said, whatever is met with in the former, is taken or imitated in the 7th chapter of the prophecies, from the latter. St. Augustine confesses to have met with in some of geton, which is mentioned in his dithose, all the principles given in the alogue on the immortality of the ding besides, that this apostle was of Pandora's box; the sacrifice of

writings of Plato, but that the Hebrews, and t ose who composed the Scriptures, robbed this celebrated philosopher? The creation of the world is much better portrayed in his Timo, than in Genesis. description of the country which Socrates made to Simies, in his Fedron, has much more beauty than that of the earthly paradise; and the fable of the Androginas, is without comparison much better contrived, than that which we are told in Genesis concerning the extraction of the rib from Adam to form a woman. Could there be any thing which appears more similar than the conflagration of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that caused by Phæton? Is there any thing more alike than the fall of Lucifer, Vulcan, or that of the Giants overwhelmned by the lightening of Jupiter? Could there be a better resemblance than that of Sampson and Hercules, Elijah and Phæton, Joseph and Hyppolytus, Nebuchadnezzar and Licaon, Tantalus and the rich man, the manna of the Israelites and the ambrosia of the gods? St. Augustine, St. Cyviel, and Theophylæt, compared Jonas with Hercules, called Trinastius, for having been three days and three nights in the belly of a whale.

The river represented by Daniel is an evident imitation from Piriphegospel according to St. John: ad- \*soul. The original sin is a portrait so accustomed to pilfering, or rather Isaac and Jephtha, of that of Iphewas such a plagiarist, that he had no genia, for whom was substitted a scruples to rob the prophets of their hart. That which is reported of enigmas and visions, to compose the Lot and his wife, is in all respects, book of the Apocalypse. Whence what the fable tells us of Baucis and Philemon. The story of Perseus ly refer to one example of the many scriptures have transcribed even to the very letter the works of Heriod and Homer.

In relation to Jesus, Celsus said, as is reported by Origen, that he took from Plato his best sentences; such as that "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." To the sect of the Pharisees to which Jesus belonged, the Christians owe their belief of the immort lity of the soul, of the resurrection, the behis morals, which are but little observed, is found in that of Epictetus With regard to Epicurius, Hierominus cites him as a man whose virtues obscured those of the best Christians, and whose life was so temperate, that his most splendid fare did not exceed a little cheese, bread and water. Leading a life so frugal, this philosopher, although a pagan, thought it was better to be indigent and rational, than rich and opulent without reason; adding that riches and wisdom are rarely seen to meet in the same person, that we cannot be happy, or live contented while our conduct is not accompanied with prudence, justice, and honor, and that from these qualities result true and solid pleasure. With respect to Epictetus, I do not believe there ever has been a man of more firmness, more austerity, or ed, if this was a fit place to do it; is called revealed religion: but fearing to exceed the limits I Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen: have prescribed to myself, I shall on- I am persuaded there is not an indi-

and Bellerophon is the foundation of beautiful actions that compose his that of St. Michael and the devil, life. Being a slave of Epaphiodito, whom he conquered: finally, it is captain of the guards of Nero, this established that the authors of the brutish man wished to twist his leg. Epictetus seeing that his master was pleased with this operation, said to him, smiling, "that he saw that the jest would not be finished without breaking the leg," which in fact happened as he had prognosti-"There! you see it!" concated. tinued he, with a countenance unchanged and smiling, "did I not tell you that you were going to break my leg?" Was there ever a constancy like this? Can it be said that Jesus would have gone to this extreme? He perspired and lief of hell; and the greatest part of cried from fear on the least cause of surprise, and discovered in his last moments, a despicable pusillanimity, and Epicurius, and an infinity of that was not seen even in his own martyrs. (To be continued.)

## The Correspondent.

Magna est Veritas et Prevalebit.

NEW-YORK, MARCH 10, 1827.

FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.

This society is increasing rapidly in numbers, and bids fair to accomplish the important object for which it was instituted. The meetings are now held in the academy, corner of Pearl-street and Broadway, and last Sunday the attendance was numerous and respectable. Lectures continue to be delivered, and a desire having been expressed that they should be published, we intend in future to devote a portion of the Correspondent to that purpose. We of more benevolence, nor of a more commence with the address of the moral and sublime practice. I say Secretary, delivered at last meeting, nothing that cannot be easily prov- on the pernicious tendency of what

subject of religion, but what must be convinced that its doctrines and precepts present an assemblage of impossibilities. In order to escape that hell which this same religion has originated, it calls on us to believe the most incomprehensible mysteries, and to practice the most unnatural and puerile maxims, which its priests have dignified with the

term morality.

We are told in the Bible, that the sum total of the duties of a Christian. is to "love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind-and our neighbors as ourselves." To induce us to love with so much ardor and devotion as is here required, it was to be expected that the principal object of it would be a being possessed of the most endearing and amiable qualities: that every feature in his character; every part of his essence or nature, would have been calculated to excite the most fervent and durable affection in the bosoms of his worshippers. Has our examination of what are called the truths of religion, given us such exalted ideas of the deity which is placed at its head? Or, rather, has the inquiry not resulted in convincing us, that so far from there existing inducements to reverence and love this deity, every representation that we have of him in the Bible, excites our abhorrence and detestation. On his first introduction to our notice, we find him permitting the father of the human race to incur eternal damnation, when he might have prevented it; and dooming his whole posterity to a similar fate, without the smallest participation in the disobedience of not do otherwise than imitate him. their parent. We see him repenting They could not avoid being caof making man, and drowning near- pricious, intolerant and cruel .-

vidual to whom I now address my- ly the whole human race, instead of self, who has at all reflected on the changing their hearts, which he could have much easier done than suspend the operation of the immutable laws of nature. He consummates this foolish and atrocious act by consuming two whole cities, and the entire of their inhabitants with celestial fire, as a punishment for crimes, which he was unwilling, though able, to prevent. Having thus satiated his vengeance, he selected a people, to whom he exclusively confided his will, and pro-mised his everlasting lavor. Regardless of justice and humanity, he put whole nations to the sword, to give this favored race possession of the promised land, in accomplishing which he authorized the commission of the most horrible and brutal barbarities.

> In what part of the character of this God are we to look for motives to love and obedience? should we say of the father of a numerous family, who would show partiality to one of his children, and deprive the others of their rights, merely to aggrandize his favorite? If we should call this injustice and cruelty, in what other light can we view the conduct attributed by the religious to their divinity? He makes a partial selection from among the nations, not from any virtue in the objects of it, but from mere caprice. He commands the butchery of a great portion of the rest, who had not in any shape offended him. Can any thing be supposed more unjust and tyran-Is it in such conduct that nical? we are to discover the goodness, the benevolence, the perfection of wisdom, of the common father of the human race

> The adorers of such a deity could

They could not respect justice when the Almighty being they worshipped utterly disregarded it. their intercourse with their own species, the want of principle, intolerance, a total absence of every thing like benevolence, must have been the leading traits in the character of all who bent the knee to this sanguinary deity. Such, in fact were his "chosen people." Proud of the supposed protection of the Most High, they imagined themselves superior to the surrounding nations, although Josephus, their own historian, admits that neighbors considered them their "the most stupid of barbarians." Unceasing in performing the religious duties imposed by the priests, they evinced the same fervor in slaughtering those whom the "Lord of Hosts" commanded to be put to death. Stupid, bigotted and superstitious, an object of contempt and horror to all who knew them, God's chosen people were the most wretched and immoral people on the face of the earth. To so great a height, indeed, had this band of robbers carried their atrocities, that Jehovah himself, after frequently visiting them with signal vengeance, perceived they were incorrigible, and, becoming tired of their frequent rebellions, abandoned them to the fate they deserved. They became the prey of the priesthood, the dupes of their prophets, and the slaves of kings, whom God gave Weakened by them in his wrath. internal quarrels and religious wars, they were completely subdued and led into captivity by the Assyrians. So many calamities, however, did not open their eyes to the knavery of their spiritual guides. After being restored to their homes by king Cyrus, their disgraceful conduct rendered them obnoxious to other princes, until at last, becoming subject to the tion commensurate with these great

Romans, these conquerors of the world entirely destroyed them as a

This outline of the history of the Jewish people, offers a memorable example of the evils which fanaticism and superstition produce. But this is only one act of the sacred drama. If we carry our views down to a period less remote, we shall find other examples, no less striking, of the baneful consequences of connecting

religion with morality. I have already pointed out the injustice of selecting one family of the human race, and loading it with favors, while the rest were left to perish. But although the impolicy of this ought to have been foreseen by an intelligent deity, Christianity assures us that God, who had so often repented of the choice he had made, determined to make another effort to reclaim the wicked and rebellious Jews. He had promised them a messiah—a deliverer, to free them from a foreign yoke, and to "cleanse them from all iniquity." That deliverer, we are told, was no less a personage than his beloved son, his equal in power and in glory. Did the Jews listen to this heavenly messenger? Did this last effort of omnipotence, so much extolled for its unparalleled wisdom and goodness, accomplish the object which a God himself contemplated? No: like all the previous attempts of the Almighty to reform his creatures, it utterly failed. Although the remedy had been provided from all eternity; although the most extraordinary and miraculous means had been adopted to prepare the minds of the Jews for the coming of this great personage; and although we are positively assured that the "fullness of time" when that nation expected him had who treated them with great severity; arrived, so far from meeting a receppreparation and the immense importance of his mission, the "Saviour of the world" was actually put to an ignominious death by the very nation he had come to cleanse from iniquity!

(To be continued.)

#### LIBERAL PUBLICATIONS.

We are authorized to state, that arrangements are now making in this city, to republish an uniform and cheap edition of all the moral and philosophical works of the most celebrated writers who have endeavored to dispel ignorance, by disseminating rational principles. The unceasing efforts of bigots and fanatics, to destroy every book that does not meet their perverted views, have rendered works of a liberal description extremely scarce. This circumstance, together with the fact, that the demand for such works is now greater than at any former period, and must increase with the rapid increase of knowledge, cannot but insure success to the present undertaking. The publication will be speedily commenced, in parts of 72 pages 12 mo. at 25 cents each, and be well executed, and printed on good paper. It is intended to commence with the celebrated work entitled " Ecce Homo!" the publisher of which was imprisoned two years in England, and fined Two hundred pounds sterling, at the instigation of the priesthood, who felt themselves unable in any other way to combat the arguments which the writer employed against their system. Ecce Homo will be followed by the theological writings of Paine, Palmer, Hume, Gibbon, Volney, Clarke,

Those who may be desirous of whose face is tinged with a deep patronizing this undertaking, will brown hue, assimilating to black, by please intimate their intention to the smoke of a lamp that is constant-the Editor of the Correspondent, 48 ly burning before her, has fastened

Pine-street. All letters must be post paid.

To Correspondents .- We have received a very curious MS. entitled "The Relation by Marcellus, (a disciple of St. Peter,) of the marvellous acts of the most blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of the magical arts of Simon the Magician;" together with two letters from "Pontius Pilate to Tiberius Cæsar;" all of which are translated from the French. They form no part of the "Apocryphal New Testament," published in London by Hone, and since republished in Philadelphia, although we find them mentioned in the list of works rejected by the early Fathers and Coun ils. The MS. is under consideration.

"Franklin" will appear in our

Will "Francis" call at our office?

### MISCELLANEOUS.

Spanish Miracles .- Spain, whatever be her degenerated state in a political point of view, must be allowed by all orthodox Catholics to be the country of miracles. There we cannot enter church, chapel, or hermitage, without finding one or more miraculous images, whose holy deeds are recorded on canvass of various magnitudes. There is, in Old Castile, near a village called Laguna, an hermitage, on the altar of which is seen a little swarthy figure, gaudily dressed in gauze robes, adorned with gold and silver tissues, and a profusion of artificial flowers, the color of which is now lost in the lapse of years, who has a great reputation in the surrounding districts for her miraculous properties. This image, whose face is tinged with a deep brown hue, assimilating to black, by the smoke of a lamp that is constanton her cheeks two crystal drops, which it is affirmed are two real coagulated tears, that she dropt on the following occasion, when she performed one of the best authenticated miracles of the numerous ones that adorn the interior walls of the her-

mitage :-

"There was a time when a band of marauders went about that country at night, committing great depredations in the dwellings and property of the peasantry, who, notwithstanding their vigilance, could never succeed in securing the robbers. this emergency, they had recourse to their patroness, whose protection they insured by dint of prayers and rich gifts. On the night of the same day, they had been making those offerings, and whilst all the inhabitants were in their beds, they were roused from their sleep by the clamorous ringing of the bells of the hermitage. All the inhabitants took to their arms and proceeded to the spot. There was nothing alarming to be seen outside of the hermitage, all the doors being carefully locked, as usual, and the hermit himself was found sleeping on his wooden couch; but, on repairing to the church, they beheld, to their astonishment and distress, the miraculous virgin, stripped of all her wearing apparel, her face suffused with crimson, at the thoughts of being seen in that naked state, and her eyes streaming with tears. Presently, however, she lifted her hand, and suddenly the bells began ringing The peasants hastened to again. the belfry, and were wonderfully surprised at finding several robbers hanging by the neck, from the cords fastened to the bells, and all their illearned booty lying in heaps at their feet! From that time no robber ever dared to come within some leagues of the village, so well protected by the holy virgin."

Devil.—It was an ancid at opinion. that the deformity of the wicked was in proportion to the degree of their guilt; whence the ugly representa-There was, however, though tions. a general character is supported, much caprice in these; but all devils are very lively, in constant action, thin, have bats' wings, and sinewy leather muscles, like monkeys. The cloven foot, horns, and tail, are ascribed to the devil's frequent appearance in the form of a goat; Seghnviium, translated in scripture by the word devils, meaning hairy goats, and the goat, being the emblem of the sin offering, and of sinful men at the day of judgment. He was never named among the first Christians, but called Malus (the wicked one) by Tartullian, Cyprian, &c. Contrarius, or lousy, &c. Old Nick is explained by Nicken, or Nocken, or Nic-neven. the same Celtic divinity as the Niord or Neith of the Gauls, whom the Edda believed to reside in the sea, or a pool, to be the instrument of drowning people. Old Harry, Old Scratch, and the Old One, are of very uncertain origin. Deuce take you was derived from Deusius, a popular demon among the Gauls, of a very li-In the Old and bidinous temper. New Testament, we find great variety of names ascribed to him; as when he is called a Serpent, a Lion, a Dragon, a Fox, a Cockatrice, the Leviathan, the Evil One, the Tempter, the Envious Man, the Accuser of the Brethren, Satan, the Devil, &c. Thus it seems, that it was an ancient scriptural fashion to use this variety of appellation, because every bad quality was ascribed to him. the thirteenth century it appears, however. that the name is very commonly uttered. Wishing people at the devil, occurs in Matthew Paris, but Joinville, adds, that they who used it were instantly buffeted in the cas-

tle of Joinville. Old romances represent devils as spiritual, invisible [i. e. when they pleased,] and incapable of sleep. They were supposed to be perpetually occupied in doing mischief to mankind; and the chief of them was the Incubus, or Night Mare, and certain fairies of a malignant nature; hence it became necessary to check their operations by charms, and invocations to saints; and hence too, at going to bed, prayers were said against their influence; and relics, images of saints, girdles, &c. were also employed for the same purpose. Asmodeus, the lame devil of Le Sage, was supposed to have particular influence in these nocturnal illusions. Robbery and murders were often committed in the disguise of devils; as rapes by human beings were fathered on nonenities, the heathen gods. As to raising the devil, one absurd process at least consisted in making a ring under a certain sign of the Zodiac, burning misletoe, depositing it in a cover of black silk at the entrance of a house or garden, and pronouncing certain words. Thus there is a mixture of druidism with it : saving the Lord's prayer backwards for this purport was a part of ancient magic, and is mentioned by William of Malmsbu-As to dealing with the devil, the same author observes that no person could be eminent in any abstruce science without suspicion of diabolical aid. In 1303, William, Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, was publicly defamed for having done homage to the devil, kissed him on the back, and often spoken to him.

Expensive Remedy.—The collegiate church of Bruges bears the name of Notre Dame de sales, and formerly possessed a miraculous image of the Virgin Mary, in which Louis XI. placed great pious faith.

Though the image itself was burnt by the Huguenots, yet strangers are still shewn a couple of letters, in the hand-writing of Louis XI., as testimonies of its miraculous power. They are directed to a Pierre Cadonet, prieur de Notre Dame de sales, and run thus: "Master Peter, my friend, I entreat you to pray without ceasing to God and our Lady of Sales, to be pleased to send me the quartan fever; for I am afflicted with a malady, of which the physicians say I cannot be healed till I have had it, and when your prayer is answered, and I have had it, I will inform you of it without delay .- Written at Tours, 6th of December. "Louis." Probably our dear Lady of Sales graciously harkened to the sick king and granted him a quartan fever, since two or three months afterwards he writes to Maitre Pierre: -" Monsieur-I entreat you yet once more to pray to our Lady of Sales on my behalf, that she bestow on me a perfect cure. In addition, write to me how much it will cost to put up a handsome piece of trelleswork before our Lady.-Written at The King Paris, 6th of Aprile? honourably fulfilled his promise to our dear Lady of Sales, by having the silver grating made, which remained in the church till the year 1562, when the Huguenots carried it off.

Providential Occurrences.—There are some persons who literally see the hand of Providence in every circumstance, however trifling. A good woman of this description, who seemed to think that Providence superintended all the minutiæ of her domestic affairs, was thus reproved one day by a visitor, In the room where they happened to be sitting, the servant accidently broke two

squares of glass in the window. 'How unfortunate!' cried the old lady, in a tone not of the most christian meekness. 'Say, rather, madam, how extremely providential,' 'Providential!' 'Yes, madam, for I see the glazier this very moment coming to the door.'

Fanaticism.—Nothing, it appears, can be more like a Christian fanatic than a Mohammedan one. Denham, in his African Travels, tells us of the lamentations of the "true believers" when they saw that the English travellers were not of their Boo Khaloom, an Arabian leader, told the people that the English were unfortunate; that they did not believe in "the Book" Koran); that they had a book of their own which did not speak of Mohammed; and that blind as they were, they believed in it! This shocking account was received in our own methodistical style, that is, by a general groan! One Malem Chadily, however, did not content himself with groaning, but had recourse to arguments with which our Springs and Strongs and Wilsons have long made the poor people familiar. "He exclaimed, 'Turn! turn! say God is god, and Mohammed is his Prophet! Wash and become clean, and Paradise is opened to you. Without this, what can save you from eternal fire? Nothing. Oh! while sitting in the third heaven, I shall see you in the midst of the flames, crying out to your friend Barca Gana and myself, Friend, give me a drop of water; but the gulf will be between us, and it will be then too late.'-The Malem's tears flowed in abundance during this harrangue, and every body appeared affected by his eloquence." How like the scenes in our conventicles!

#### PROSPECTUS.

The object contemplated by this Journal, is the diffusion of correct principles, which alone form the basis of morals and of happiness.

Notwithstanding the vast number of publications that are daily issuing from the press, there is still wanting a paper which will fearlessly advocate the paramount importance of the laws of Nature, and the dignity of Reason. It is by departing from these that good sense has been nearly banished from the earth; that mankind are in darkness as to their true interests; and that all the miseries which afflict society have originated

The pages of the Correspondent will be devoted chiefly to communications, and to miscellaneous articles, calculated to enlarge the mind, and bring man back to the path from which he has deviated. Although we recognize nothing to be true that is incapable of proof, or demonstration, the erroneous opinions entertained by individuals, can form no apology for the neglect or the violation of the rules of courtesy. No illiberal discussions or personalities, will be permitted: it shall be our constant aim to establish a character for temperate and sober reasoning, for open investigation, and for universal conciliation.

The Correspondent is published weekly, at \$3 per annum, payable in advance. No departure from this condition can be admitted as to Country Subscribers—Communications (post paid) to be addressed to the Editor.

\*\* Arrangements have now been made by which the CORRESPONDENT will appear regularly every Saturday. Those who have signified their intention to patronize this work, are respectfully reminded of the terms of subscription. They cannot but be aware, that considerable outlays are requisite to effect its establishment, and that unless a desire to see this done is accompanied by pecuniary aid, they may, possibly, be disappointed in their wishes. From those city subscribers who may not feel it convenient to pay for a whole year in advance, the hal, of that sum will be accepted.

The CORRESPONDENT is published at No. 48 Pine-street, opposite Niblo's Coffee House; and subscriptions continue to be received at 114 Fulton-street; at the book store corner of Vesey-street and Broadway; at the book store corner of Reed and Greenwich-streets; and at the Bank Lodge, 45 William-street, near Wall-street